

### **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus and method for automatically adjusting the timing of a transfer assist blade in an electrostatographic imaging system. The apparatus and method operate by partially toning an area of the photoreceptor and then  
5     actuating the transfer assist blade such that it smears at least a portion of the partially toned area. Using an electronic toner area cover sensor system, the amount of smearing can be determined. From this, the timing of engagement of the transfer assist blade with the photoreceptor can be determined and, if necessary, adjusted.